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EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE enormous hare started on February 2nd by a leading article in *The Times* backed up by a long letter om Sir George Dyson, was allowed to return to its orm almost unmolested except for a solitary skirmish ith Mr. John Christie of Glyndebourne. If it was oped that general interest in national opera and ballet ould be aroused by comparing the grants of public oney given respectively to the Royal Opera House, ovent Garden, and Sadler's Wells Theatre, such hopes ust have been immediately dashed, though for the first me it was made clear that a curious anomaly exists as gards the two companies, both of which bear the name adler's Wells." I believe I am right in saying that most everyone has been under the impression that ere was still a very close connection between the two d that the School at Baron's Court was at least as much e financial responsibility of the Royal Opera House as was of Sadler's Wells Theatre. Indeed, it would ve been impossible not to receive this impression nce the first announcement of the School's opening as made publicly at a press conference held at the pera House. For the first time, however, it has been ade clear that, although the company at Covent arden expects to receive the ultimate benefit of the aining afforded by the School and the resident Sadler's Vells company, it is financially responsible for so small a rt of the expenses that its assistance is negligible in mparison with the burden which falls upon the overnors of Sadler's Wells Theatre who are prevented, their charter, from increasing their prices—their ly method of bringing in additional revenue. The tual sum handed over to the School by the Covent arden Opera Trust in 1949 was a great deal less than at spent on the already-scrapped production of *lome*. It is manifestly impossible for a ballet company rforming only once a week for months on end to pay s own way and, if this preliminary stage training is nsidered of sufficient importance to be essential fore the dancers are ready for the great Opera House auditorium, the least the Opera House can do is to put aside for this purpose a fair proportion of the extremely generous Government grant it receives each year. One of the difficulties of sorting out facts has always been that the grant given to the Opera House covers both opera and ballet, and the touchiness of the administration on the subject of how much goes to each is notorious.

Roland Petit's Les Ballets de Paris had such a success during its three-month run at the Winter Garden, New York (the first month of which was concurrent with Sadler's Wells' appearance at the Metropolitan Opera House) that its subsequent equally successful tour in the United States and Canada has been extended to April 1st. It could go on for considerably longer but Petit is due in London at the beginning of April to stage for Sadler's Wells Ballet his *divertissement* which is to be called *Ballabile*. This will be set to an arrangement of music by Chabrier and scenery and costumes will be by Antoine Clavé, whose *Carmen* was, beyond doubt, the outstanding décor of 1949. Just in case there is one reader to whom the word is unknown, "*ballabile*" is the term used for the group movements of the *corps de ballet* in a classical ballet. Petit's company will return to Paris direct from New York and will open a four-months' season at the Marigny Theatre early in May. Petit will produce a new ballet in June for which he has written the story *and the music*. It is to be called *La Croqueuse de Diamants* (*The Woman who Bites Diamonds*) and will have both dialogue and songs for which the words and lyrics are by Raymond Queneau, a disciple of Sartre. André Beaurepaire is the designer. The company will return to America in October for a further New York season and a coast-to-coast tour, so that once again their visit will coincide with that of Sadler's Wells.

Ballet Theatre has not appeared in New York since it was re-formed, but news of its recent season in Chicago during its present tour indicates that its standard is very high (with some particularly promising male recruits) and that the many newcomers are already being well assimilated. Maria Tallchief was with them as guest artist until the New York City Center resumed its ballet season, and the other principal dancers include Nora Kaye, Nana Gollner, Diana Adams, Igor Youskevitch, John Kriza and Hugh Laing. From all accounts (and this comes from several sources) Youskevitch is dancing better than ever which probably means that, outside Russia, he is the greatest male dancer in the world at the moment. Let us hope that the rumours regarding a London season and an appearance at the Edinburgh Festival will materialise. Erik Bruhn, the Danish dancer who was seen here with the Metropolitan Ballet, is now with Ballet Theatre, appearing in

(*Continued on page 8*)

Action photograph by Frank Sharman

MARGOT FONTEYN AND MICHAEL SOMES IN "CINDERELLA" WHICH OPENED THE CURRENT SEASON AT THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, COVENT GARDEN

NO NOVELTIES

By MARY CLARKE

THE early weeks of the current Sadler's Wells season at Covent Garden have been without any choreographic novelty up to the time of writing; indeed only two ballets have been presented, *Cinderella* and *The Sleeping Beauty*. By the time these words are read, however, Miss de Valois' *Don Quixote* may well have made amends for the quiet time, although it seems increasingly unlikely that all the bright promises of new ballets given at the end of the 1949 season will materialise before the company sets off for North America again in September. We must resign ourselves to the fact that long American tours are not going to increase the annual output of new ballets. The company will not stay in the same city long enough to allow American choreographers sufficient time in which to understand its abilities and to create for it, and when the company returns home at the end of the tour the dancers are going to be tired out while half the costumes and scenery will be travel-stained and in need of replacement. I am all in favour of visits to America or the Continent in so far as they bring new stimulants, new ideas and new collaborators but we cannot ignore t fact that at the same time they exhaust and unset choreographers and dancers. Similar conditions kill the De Basil company.

Sadler's Wells, of course, have an enormous advanta over De Basil in that they possess a home to return to school and a junior company which faithfully work aw in the background to supply recruits and new blood. seems to me there is now, more than ever before, overwhelming case for a strong secondary (not nec sarily "junior") company to be maintained in Europe fill the bill during the quarter of the year in which t major company is in America and to help relieve th commitments generally. In this connexion the prese financial difficulties which threaten to diminish t Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet may prove to be not on tragic but fatal.

In the meantime we rely on the good old standby alternative casts for our novelties and certainly the was something to startle on most evenings devoted ballet at Covent Garden during January and February.

The Sleeping Beauty, given for the first time this season on January 20th, showed Fonteyn in all her glory and received the kind of ovation that should have marked the season's opening night. Shearer subsequently shared the role of Aurora with Fonteyn and showed an enormous increase in freedom and expression from the first occasion on which I saw her dance it. She is not, I think, either temperamentally or physically designed for the *prima ballerina assoluta* roles but she is becoming a magnificent dancer and will soon deserve to have a great ballet written for her. That is a tribute which Beryl Grey too should earn one day. For her it has been a disappointing season, a long spell as the Winter Fairy and the Lilac Fairy and then sudden illness on the very eve of her much-anticipated Aurora. Her illness also robbed John Field of all but two of his performances as the Prince in *Sleeping Beauty* although I suspect that his immediate future is rather as a dancer than a cavalier.

The Blue Bird problem is still unresolved and alone seems to warrant an enormous Arts Council grant to the Sadler's Wells School. Rassine has lost all authority in the role and dissipates flashes of brilliance with moments of incredible carelessness. Brian Shaw is a fine dancer but physically quite unsuited to the Blue Bird; there is no suggestion of flight in his performance, only abounding strength and vigour. Violetta Elvin still seems to me pre-eminent in the female role. There are moments of such splendour in her supported adagio that one longs that she might have a good partner and extended rehearsal time in which to master some of the other great classical *pas de deux*. I think the other female dancers in the Blue Bird *pas de deux* would do better if they performed with less hastily assumed grand manner and more simplicity: it is essentially a role of utter simplicity.

Pouncing here and there on memorable moments in *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella* I should like to applaud the fresh gaiety and charm of Nadia Nerina in the Florestan *pas de trois* and as the Fairy Spring; the beauty of Pamela May in her benevolent parts; the whimsical-comical Jester of Alexander Grant (Shaw misses the heart of the character); Gerd Larsen's delicious flightiness in her Florestan solo; and John Field's fine dancing in a variety of small parts.

Ashton and Helpmann who had been letting the Ugly Sisters run away with their senses of proportion, seem to have recaptured them and gave subtler and therefore much funnier performances than of late. Helpmann has been particularly inspired; it is meat and drink to me, as to Touchstone, to see a clown, and in this part Helpmann comes near the genius of Danny Kaye or our late beloved Sid Field.

PAMELA MAY, WHO IS DANCING BRILLIANTLY THIS SEASON, AS THE FAIRY GODMOTHER IN "CINDERELLA"
Action photograph by Frank Sharman

MARTHA GRAHAM'S NEW YORK SEASON

By ARTHUR TODD

A SERIES of programmes by Martha Graham and her dance company is usually one of the high spots of any dance season. Her return in January, after a two year absence from the New York theatre-dance scene was no exception. As a matter of fact, Graham's re-appearance proved to be one of the most rewarding experiences in a year that has already been distinguished by an abundance of rich and varied dance fare. Martha Graham's series of nine performances took place at the Forty Sixth Street Theatre at the end of January, just before she set off on the second half of her transcontinental tour that will take her and the company to the West Coast and back before Spring.

Coming into New York after a staggering season of one night stand performances on the first half of her road tour as well as a January debut of *Judith*, a new twenty-five minute solo composed to a specially commissioned score which she danced with the Louisville Symphony Orchestra, Martha Graham's dance art was, nevertheless, at the peak of its perfection. She was, to use a musical term, at concert pitch, and each performance was burnished and stamped with the seal of her individual genius. Moreover, she has never looked more beautiful nor more freshly radiant. As is always the case when Graham dances in New York, her large audiences were further distinguished by the presence of many of the major figures in the worlds of dance, art, music, literature and the theatre. On her opening night she was greeted with a spontaneous ovation that was repeated in an array of critical superlatives in the next morning's press. Certainly there is no dance artist in America today that has caused more controversy nor that has nearly so large a following. Since Graham and her company plan to visit England this summer during her first European tour, her dance and her current repertoire take on an added interest and importance.

Martha Graham may set up a challenge, at first, to those who have only been accustomed to the ballet because her approach to dance is utterly different and individual. Her phrasing and accents, for instance, are completely un-balletic. However, it should be remembered that Graham *knows* ballet since she was thoroughly schooled in it during her early apprenticeship with the Denishawn School. As a matter of fact, it is difficult, if not impossible, to compare Graham to ballet or, for that matter, any other dance form, for she is incomparable. Graham uses dance creatively and her often angul[ar] percussive, distorted movements are perfectly suited [to] the inner content which she wishes to convey.

Since her first New York solo programme in t[he] Spring of 1926, Graham has carved out her o[wn] techniques of dance and her own creative forms. In [so] doing, she has widened the boundaries of expressi[ve] dance movement for her own generation as well as f[or] all those of the future. Technically, there is nō dance who can surpass her movement in the whole field American dance. It would be a mistake, however, judge Graham's dance only for its sheer physi[cal] magnificence because, in a true sense, her art is neith[er] visual nor ornamental. Rather, it is something y[ou] *feel* and it isn't at all something just to look at. Mor[e]over, if one judges her dance works solely on the

MARTHA GRAHAM WITH MAY O'DONNELL (STANDING)
"CAVE OF THE HEART"

Photograph by Cris Alexander

MARTHA GRAHAM IN "DEATHS AND ENTRANCES"

urface characteristics, brilliant as they are, one would niss the motivating core that is within. The true basis f Martha Graham's art is the communication of motion. Her movement, which may at first baffle ome who do not sense its purpose, actually is a sort of gn post that points the way towards showing us our wn humanity more highly illumined and explored. ll of her characters are archetypes, larger than life, but h them we may perceive infinite and eternal truths. hey are, indeed, revelations of the inner spirit that ortray the secret life of the heart.

These very aspects are discernible in her three new orks which had their New York premiers in January. he first, *The Eye of Anguish*, based on the archaic, re-Shakespearean legend of King Lear, is programmed s "following the outer sequence of the story and the nner sequence of the phantasma of Lear's mind". hough this is a more literary framework than Graham sually employs, it serves, nevertheless, to present a ivid and moving comprehension of the inner and outer onflicts that tortured Lear. Much more abstract is he second new work, *Diversion of Angels*, performed to a oteworthy score by Norman Dello Joio. It is a lyric roup work for the younger members of the company nd "its action takes place in the imaginary garden love creates for itself". This is a work rich in emotional shadings and its movement action is born from the sudden meetings, partings and re-unitings of young lovers. Though Martha Graham choreographed both of these new works, she did not appear in them herself. However, she did present *Fable of Eve*, a brilliant new solo work in a comic vein. Like Beatrice Lillie, Graham can also be sharply satirical and downright hilariously funny. Performing against a rather surrealistic boudoir set, Graham presents a masterly etching of a vain and silly woman enmeshed in the trivialities of self-adornment. Each shrug of the shoulder and hapless hand gesture serves further to define the emptiness that is beneath the chic and well-groomed surface.

Other master-works from the Graham repertoire of recent seasons offer a more comprehensive assessment of the special riches of her art. Of these, *Errand into the Maze*, freely based on the legend of the minotaur and the labyrinth, is the best example. As its programme note reads, "This dance has, as its core, the errand-journey into the maze of the heart's darkness in order to face and do battle with the Creature of Fear. There is the accomplishment of the errand, the instant of triumph, the emergence from the dark." Graham has never performed this work more magnificently than she did this season. All of us have faced fear, in one form or another, and it is impossible not to feel a sense of participation and understanding in this perilous adventure that Graham dances with such consummate insight. In it panic follows the first frantic fear, then the indecision that marks the first hazardous attempts at escape. Later comes resolve, determination and, finally, triumph. Graham's zig-zag journey over a curved tape that stretches across the stage floor is full of pulsations that make her panic sensed, felt and self-identifiable to every member of the audience.

An entirely different kind of journey is undergone in *Cave of the Heart*, which is described as "a dance of possessive love, a love which feeds upon itself and, when it is overthrown, is fulfilled only in revenge". In this Graham in the Medea-like central role gives a shattering performance that demonstrates the tragic outcome that is the result of a consuming jealousy and revengefulness. Her dance, as it progresses to its inevitable conclusion, becomes a radiation of evil that has, at its climax, some of the most virtuosic and technically demanding movement that Graham has yet choreographed or danced. As a sheer *tour de force* it is breath-taking and its inner implications present one of the most dramatically moving portrayals in the whole field of contemporary dance.

Appalachian Spring, which is, in essence, one of the most American dances ever composed, offers quite a remarkable example of Martha Graham's great versatility. This tenderly eloquent dance work, dealing with

a young pioneer couple in an earlier day Pennsylvania, tells how "spring was celebrated by a man and a woman building a house with joy and love and prayer; by a revivalist and his followers in their shouts of exaltation; by a pioneering woman with her dreams of the promised land". Graham appears as a radiant bride and we follow her in passages with the husband, revivalist and pioneer woman to the conclusion, when she is left alone with her husband, to settle a wilderness land. This is one of Graham's most lyrical works and it is richly evocative of an earlier day America. The characters of the revivalist and the pioneering woman are tellingly realised and serve further to offset Graham's central role. The richly melodious score by Aaron Copland is one of the most beautiful in recent memory and, on its own merits, it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for music during the year of its premier.

It is almost inevitable that in any of her seasons Martha Graham should come in for the chief praise. In this instance, however, it is necessary to add that May O'Donnell excelled, as usual, in *Appalachian Spring* and *Herodiade*. And from the permanent Graham group, which numbers about a dozen, one member has emerged who is one of the most promising male dancers to appear on the scene since José Limon made his debut with t Humphrey-Weidman Group back in the early 1930 This is Robert Cohan and he moves beautifully alwa and with great simplicity and intensity. He has recen developed a remarkable sense of characterisation a projection and his emergence, like that of Stuart Hod another gifted young dancer in the troupe, offers gr promise to the future of American male dance.

It is unfortunate, in a way, that words and pictu can only give a clue to the special and remarkable geni that is Martha Graham's. Actually, she has to observed in movement to be truly sensed. Right no it looks very much as though Britain and most Europe are due for this great experience next summ

(*Continued from page 3*)

Gala Performance and as Paris in *Romeo and Juliet*. And conclude, here is a little story about Nora Kaye, w has been earning superlatives in a number of rol Informed by the stage manager that taking photograp in the wings was not allowed during a performance, s retorted—"Gosh, the discipline here! Who do th think we are—Sadler's Wells?"

P.W.M.

THE NEW BALLET AT SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE

IN writing of *El Destino* which had its first performance on January 31st it is essential to bear in mind exactly what one is criticising. Obviously this is not Spanish dancing as we have seen it performed by the companies brought here by Amaya, Mariemma or Esmeralda. What happened, one may assume, is that, on the strength of the success of these genuinely Spanish performers, Angelo Andes was asked by the management to provide a ballet with Spanish dancing as its basis and was given the usual few weeks' rehearsal period during which time he not only had to produce the ballet but teach a ballet-trained company the rudiments of two different styles of Spanish dancing and the playing of castanets. When these factors are taken into consideration the result can only be described as remarkable, and as ninety-nine per cent. of the Sadler's Wells audience is one hundred per cent. ignorant of the technique of Spanish dancing (and this goes for most of the critics also), the tremendous reception given *El Destino* at its first performance need occasion no surprise.

Angelo Andes, the dancers and Hugh Stevenson (whose dresses are magnificent) all deserve equal praise for the effect achieved, and it was good to see such intelligent lighting and such exciting entrances, with the dancers suddenly emerging from the blackness.

The weakest part of the ballet is the attempt introduce a story, the formal groupings and set steps the Spanish idiom being singularly recalcitrant to th needs of story telling, as Massine long ago realised wi *Le Tricorne*. It would be better to omit the pl altogether, which would admittedly mean altering th title, and leave the work as a suite of four dances, th first and last for the whole company, and the second an third a male solo and duo respectively. The solo as it present stands is the least effective of the four, thoug Pirmin Trecu performs it with his usual fire an conviction.

The music by Manuel Lazareno is tuneful an invigorating in exactly the way one expects of Spanis music which is not quite top rank.

P. W. MANCHESTER

The action photograph by Duncan Melvin on the cover is of Teresa and Luisillo, who will now be appearing at the Prince's Theatre, London, in May and not March as originally announced.

MAY O'DONNELL, MARTHA GRAHAM AND ERICK HAWKINS IN "APPALACHIAN SPRING"

AN OVERDOSE OF CLASSICS?

By KATHRINE SORLEY WALKER

EVERY newcomer to ballet wants to see *Swan Lake* because he knows the music, or *The Sleeping Beauty* because the newspapers said it was such a success in New York. Every student-dancer with an evening off likes to see a long classical ballet, because it is full of the tricky things she is herself trying to do every day, and she wants to see how other dancers get over the difficulties. Every *materfamilias* with a small stage-struck daughter likes to start her ballet-going with *Coppélia*, because it is bright and light and amusing. Every regular ballet-goer, however often he has seen any of these ballets, will turn up at the theatre to see familiar and well-loved interpretations of parts, or to watch new soloists take over.

Therefore a company which performs the full-length classics never fears a deserted box-office ; but there are dangers in this acceptance of the classics as the surest means of filling a theatre, and at the moment they are only too apparent.

The three full-evening productions of the Sadler's Wells Ballet—the company which first mounted them in this country—date respectively from 1934 (*Swan Lake*), 1939 (*Sleeping Beauty*) and 1940 (*Coppélia*). In each case they were produced as a normal part of the repertoire, and given in alternation with bills of modern ballets, or of mixed classic and modern such as *Giselle* or *Casse Noisette* with a second short ballet as companion. This was a thoroughly healthy state of affairs. Dancers and audience alike profited by the mixture, and were able to move easily, in execution and appreciation, from a triple modern bill one evening to a performance of *Swan Lake* the next. It was not until the shadow of Covent Garden darkened the war-time brilliance of the Wells that performers and spectators alike were expected to exist for weeks at a time on a diet of *Sleeping Beauty*, and the reason for this can be none other than the supposed difficulty of filling such a large auditorium by any other means than the "classical" ballet. Naturally these long, easy-on-the-eye-and-intellect, well-publicised productions are the heaven-sent method of getting in the public; but which public? And what effect does endless repetition of one

ballet have on the dancers who have to give it performance after performance, and the ballet that has to stand the strain?

There are of course many reasons for performing and seeing these ballets. Their merit is partly historical, partly contemporary. They are, although so popular today, full of nineteenth-century modes and manners; and, though lacking the firm base of script which preserves a classic play, are sufficiently identified with their original selves to provide a classical background from which the student can better appreciate the development to Fokine and the contemporary choreographers. As such they are valuable ; and they are in some sections of more living value, for they have certain *enchaînements*, and certain dramatic passages, which have universal worth both in time and place for both dancers and audience. Nevertheless it is idle to pretend that ballet has not progressed since the nineteenth-century; had it not done so not one member of a contemporary ballet audience could have the faintest interest in it as an art form. Therefore, while occasional performances of such a ballet are of t greatest importance from the point of view of getti things in perspective, and cherishing the very lov traditions of the nineteenth century, frequent p formances can only mean an obscuring in everyon mind of the advances which have made the twentie century ballet a theatrical medium of outstandi accomplishment. Watching *The Sleeping Beauty*, t spectator can ignore the existence of the Foki principles; he can forget Diaghilev; he is untouched the experiments in movement or music that have be made by Massine or Balanchine or Ashton. T brilliant achievements in dance drama of de Valois a Helpmann, the intimate charm of the small-sta ballets of Howard or Tudor, the extensions of ball produced by Robbins or Petit—none of these exist f the eyes that see choreography appropriate to Petipa time, the mind that is attuned only to the fairy-tale to through classical dance and mime. It is a resolute balle goer who can keep his head through a surfeit of *T Sleeping Beauty* or any other full-length classic. He wal

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ALICIA MARKOVA WAS PHOTOGRAPHED WITH HER THREE SISTERS, VIVIENNE, DORIS AND BERNICE, THE OCCASION BEING A PARTY GIVEN BY MR. ARNOLD HASKELL. THIS YEAR MARKOVA CELEBRATES HER SILVER JUBILEE AS A DANCER, HAVING MADE HER DEBUT WITH THE DIAGHILEV BALLET IN 1925 AT THE AGE OF FOURTEEN

Photograph by G. B. L. Wilson

tightrope of reason between two precipices—he runs he risk of being alienated in taste from the ballet of s own time, or of coming to detest the ballet of the ast—both grave dangers.

What then should be the place of the full-length assics in the repertoire? They should, above all ings, take their place *in* the repertoire, sharing qually with programmes of modern ballets. If the fficulties of scene-changing at Covent Garden (they ere overcome at smaller theatres) make it impossible present them in alternation, there should be a rule at no full-length ballet should be given more than ven or eight consecutive ballet performances—one eek of complete repertoire, two of mixed opera and llet. That would permit of the ideal ratio as regards sting—three (or four) performances of the first cast, vo each for two alternatives, so that everyone should reasonably content. The engagement of "guest tists" appearing in the classics should never be made excuse for altering this practice. Of course, for e gala occasion there is nothing to touch *The Sleeping auty*. A gala, generally speaking, means a dressed-up air directed to please the fashionable "casual" public, d get in even more money than usual. The regular llet-goer is there only on sufferance; and the main quirements for the performance are that it shall be ectacular, and easy to comprehend and applaud.

The Sleeping Beauty was for many reasons the obvious d ideal choice for the opening night in New York. is already history how successful it was. The sad ing about its success is that the Americans, and those luenced by them over here, are likely to feel that such oductions are better than the modern short ballet, nply because they have seen nothing like them before. ey are, of course, about a century late in the develop- nt of such a taste; but the fervour with which they ways adopt things that please them can easily in this se be injurious to the development of ballet, if we dy to suit them with more and more performances the long classical ballets and their contemporary oes.

Ballet, like all arts, must develop to live. It has eady developed from these nineteenth-century oductions—to go back to them, to return to the itations under which they were composed, is such ly that only the fact that it is already beginning to pen can persuade one that it is possible. It will ntinue to happen as long as managements care more satisfying the general than the specialised public, l have not the courage to stand or fall by a policy of ll-balanced repertoire and a judicious mixture of dition and experiment. It will be consolidated if we ntinue to demand of our living choreographers that ey should produce reminiscences of these old ballets, gardless of their own talents. We have seen what pens under such circumstances, and it ought to be realised that this is a purely retrogressive step. To ask our contemporary choreographers to wash out from their experience all the progress which lies between the Maryinsky in the nineteenth century and our own theatre to-day, to adjust themselves once more to the contriving of dances to illustrate a fairy story with set variations and *pas de deux*, with grand transformation scenes and stage effects, is to require them to do something at which they are inexpert, temperamentally unsuited, and already far exceeded by the efforts of M. Petipa. Is it sufficient that we should spend our time doing, less well, something that our grandparents or great-grandparents did? that we should paint second-rate Degas, write second-rate Dickens, compose second-rate Tchaikovsky, and produce second-rate Petipa? Whatever our personal tastes, we must, surely, admit that there is more life, more imagination, more significance for our time in the production of ballets like *The Rake's Progress* or *Symphonic Variations*, like *Miracle in the Gorbals* or *Interplay*, like *Jardin aux Lilas* or *Carmen*, than in any recapitulation of the ideas and styles of the Maryinsky or the Alhambra.

We have been, in the past, happy in having our modern ballets nicely balanced by performances of the full-length nineteenth-century works, and the other way round. It would be a miserable development if either side were to gain the ascendancy; but unless the people who are really interested in the future of ballet do all they can to keep the scales weighed equally, the casual public who help to fill Covent Garden and the super cinemas are going to make *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *Coppélia* and their modern counterparts a poison which may destroy ballet as a living art.

NEWS FROM NEW YORK

THE three big stories of the month have all something to do with Europe. The American season of the Sadler's Wells Ballet has been finally announced officially to the great relief of all balletomanes. It will open on September 10th at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, and will run through to January 14th, terminating in the provinces. The New York season will probably be only three weeks instead of the four last year. The reason is that Mr. Rudolf Bing, director-elect of the Metropolitan, wants to have a longer opera season and also a longer rehearsal period, which advances the time the opera needs the house by four weeks.

Although they did not know it, New Yorkers came very close to not having a Sadler's Wells Ballet season at all. It has been reported on good authority, although not officially, that Mr. Bing did not want to rent the Met to outside attractions at all. For a while, in late December, it looked that Sadler's Wells would open its season in Philadelphia, omitting New York entirely.

Mr. S. Hurok, the American impresario of Sadler's Wells, was doing his best to overcome the unexpected handicaps, when he was seized with an acute attack of appendicitis and taken to the hospital for an emergency operation on New Year's eve. People in ballet business thought that this accident would eliminate the New York season. However, when Mr. Hurok recovered, he renewed his efforts and succeeded in arranging the season.

Only second in importance to the American season of Sadler's Wells is the news that Covent Garden has invited the New York City Ballet to dance at the Royal Opera House a six-week season beginning July 4th. The invitation is in the name of British Arts Council and the London season will be followed by a tour of the provinces. There has been a great deal of talk about the possibility of the New York City Ballet going to England. Ninette de Valois had cut part of her Canadian tour last fall to attend performances of the New York City Ballet at the City Center. David L. Webster, on his second visit to the United States, also saw several performances of the company. Miss de Valois told your reporter that she had enjoyed the performances and thought a great deal of the company. However, neither Miss de Valois, nor Mr. Webster would make a definite commitment about engaging the company for London. It was said that Mr. Webster remarked that the absence of scenery and elaborate costuming in some of the New York City Ballet works would not be accepted favourably in England. Nothing was heard from England until the end of January, when George Balanchine, artistic director of the company, learned about Mr. Hurok's planned flight to London and asked him to pursue the subject further. On February 9th the impresario telephoned from London about the success of his negotiations. Balletomanes as well as the company are elated over the invitation. Meanwhile the New York City Ballet opened its four-week New York season on February 21st with six new ballets : *Les Illuminations* by Frederick Ashton, to music by Benjamin Britten (for strings and tenor), based on the poems of Arthur Rimbaud, in scenery and costumes by Cecil Beaton; *The Prodigal Son*, by George Balanchine, to Serge Prokhofiev music; *The Age of Anxiety*, by Jerome Robbins, to music by Leonard Bernstein, based on the poem by W. H. Auden; *Jones Beach*, by George Balanchine, to music of the young Dutch composer Jurriaan Andriessen; *The Duel*, by William Dollar, to music by Rafaello de Banfield (a restaging of *Le Combat*, which is in the repertoire of Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris); and *Pas de Deux Romantique*, by George Balanchine to *Concertino* by Carl Maria von Weber. Igor Stravinsky is due from California to conduct the first performance of *Firebird* on the opening night, and *Orpheus*, on February 22nd, which are danced to his music.

Of lesser importance, but nevertheless very interesting is the news that Yvette Chauviré, late *première danseuse étoile* of the Paris Opéra, will be guest ballerina of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo when it opens its New York spring season on April 9th at the Metropolitan. No announcement of Mlle. Chauviré's repertoire has been made, but we learn unofficially that she will dance *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and several *pas de deux*. The season is scheduled for three weeks but may run a fourth if attendance warrants.

Ballet Theatre, which is now touring, has not made any definite announcements of a New York spring season. It is generally accepted, however, that it will open in New York sometime around April 9th (Easter Sunday) at an unnamed Broadway theatre and will then play in opposition to Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. This is not considered a wise move in ballet circles, at least not wise financially, but it is feared that if Ballet Theatre wants to play a spring season in New York, it cannot help itself. The interesting point is that Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo had suggested to Ballet Theatre a joint spring season at the Metropolitan, i.e. both companies would play simultaneously, each giving two ballets an evening, but Ballet Theatre rejected the suggestion on the grounds that it would be to the advantage of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and to the disadvantage of Ballet Theatre. The idea of a "ballet war" between two American companies, which unhealthy business-wise, appears intriguing to balletomanes.

"DANCE NEWS" Service—Special to "Ballet Today"

NEWS FROM PARIS

THE Opéra Ballet will be creating several new ballets this season, of which the most important is *Chevalier Errant* or *Don Quixote*, a ballet in six scenes with music by Jacques Ibert. Lycette Darsonval, Michelin Bardin, Liliane Daydée and Espanita Cortez will be the interpreters; scenery and costumes are by Fernan Flores. Later, *Phèdre*, by Jean Cocteau with his own décor and music by Georges Auric, will be interpreted by Tamara Toumanova and Serge Lifar. The Opéra will also stage a revival of *La Sylphide*, with a new score by Noel Gaillon. *Les Fourberies* by Tony Aubin, *Nauteos*, by Jeanne Leleu, *Cinema* by Réné Jeanne and Louis Aubert, *L'Astrologue dans la Puits* by Henri Barraud, complete the ballet programme of the Opéra.

Septuor, the new ballet by Francis Blanche and Jean Lutèce, described as "a ballet outside convention", has been talked of as an unexampled spectacle, composed of irreconcilable extremes, and so forth. None of this was evident at its première. The music, by the jazz composer Jean Lutèce, has nothing revolutionary about it, even though it incorporates national anthems, religious music and modern dance rhythms. It may even be described as timid, flowing easily and well adapted to choreography.

The décor, by Yves Bonnat, consists of a high tower, two staircases and a prison wall in which a grill is fixed. On this scene appear seven human or symbolical characters, all doomed to die by destiny, or because they do not fit the social environment. There is a prophet preaching brotherhood; a rope-maker who is strangled with his own rope, the madman in love with a princess, etc. In the end, Man sees that by killing these symbols one after the other, he has killed all the love in the world.

Philosophy and choreography are difficult yokefellows; but Serge Lifar has pointed this moral tale with choreography which is both rich and ingenious. *Septuor* was danced, not by the stars but by the young dancers of the Opéra; we are glad to pay tribute to Lemoine as the chimerical madman, Lefèvre as the apostle, Franchetti as a hunchback and Duflot as an Unbeliever, and the rest. There is no star part for a woman in *Septuor*; Paulette Dynalix has a short variation, and Bessy appears for long enough to be murdered.

Mme. Potron's drop-curtain is pleasing, and Yves Bonnat's costumes austere, like the décor. *Septuor* did not fail to interest the public, but the credit for its success is primarily due to Serge Lifar; it is a lightweight, pleasing of its kind, and should never have been described as sensational.

A *Corps de Ballet* always resembles its director. We have often wished for someone who would reanimate the ballet of the Opéra Comique, whose promising dancers have long been obscured by sketchy and inadequate presentation.

Leonide Massine has now accomplished this miracle, and has staged at the Opéra Comique an excellent revival of *Le Beau Danube*. Massine himself, who has retained his elegant line informed by an alert intelligence; was the hussar; and Genevieve Kergrist was worthy to follow the best interpreters of the Street-dancer's part.

The *corps de ballet* were inspired to show us qualities which we could only guess at before; the evening was full of surprises, from the *Pas de deux* (Massine and Bergreen) to the variations of the *First Hand* by Ninon Leberthe, who had her first opportunity of displaying her very promising technique and talent.

The *Pas de Trois* was also remarkable—danced by Michel Gevel, Lucien Mars and Genevieve Kergrist.

Altogether, the management of the Opéra Comique are to be congratulated on the appointment of Massine and the reaction of its ballet.

The Opéra Comique will be showing *Les Matelots* of Auric, Tchaikowsky's *Concerto*, Loucheur's *Leap Frog*, *Le Diable dans le Beffroi* by Inghelbrecht, *Koukourouy* by Stan Golestan, *Batracity* by Bergmann, and *La Colline des Fantômes* by Tcherepnine. FERDINAND REYNA

YVETTE CHAUVIRÉ'S DEBUT AT THE SCALA, MILAN

THE opening night of the ballet season took place on December 31st, 1949, with Yvette Chauviré as the star.

Le Lac des Cygnes, *El Amor Brujo* and *L'Oiseau de Feu* were shown before a distinguished audience, the orchestra being under the direction of Issay Dobrowen.

Nicholas Benois designed the décor for *Le Lac des Cygnes*, in which Chauviré and her partner, Vladimir Skouratoff, scored a real triumph.

El Amor Brujo, décor by Felice Casorati, was inter-

YVETTE CHAUVIRÉ AND VLADIMIR SKOURATOFF IN "LE LAC DES CYGNES" AT LA SCALA, MILAN. THIS PICTURE GIVES A GOOD IDEA OF THE NICHOLAS BENOIS DÉCOR

preted by Luciana Novaro, who did full justice to the part of Candela.

The climax of the evening was provided by *L'Oiseau de Feu*, produced by the painter Alberto Savinio, who was also responsible for the décor and costumes, surprisingly surrealistic in style. The parts of the enchanted Firebird and Princess were admirably danced by Yvette Chauviré and Olga Amati respectively. The three ballets were all directed by Margherita Wallmann, choreographer and ballet mistress of the Scala.

Reference must also be made to Gilda Maocchi in *El Amor Brujo*, and to Yurek Shabalevsky, Giuliu Perugini, Yvan Desceff, Dora Ricci and Vera Colombo.

In this first presentation of ballet, the Scala has obviously made a bid to regain its former great tradition, and has not hesitated to engage foreign talent of the highest order. The performance was followed by a brilliant reception for the artists, (and as a particular tribute to Yvette Chauviré), given by Antonio Ghiringhelli, the Director of the Scala, at his private residence.

A BALLET-GOER'S CAUSERIE (4)

By ALAN STOREY

THE STAG AT BAY: A BACKGROUND WITH FIGURES

(continued)

THE difficulties which attended the creation of *Dante Sonata* are now seen to be little more than an extension of the limitations and privations peculiar to our National Ballet during its formative years, and from which it has not yet fully recovered. Quite apart from economic restrictions, its ballets were then unavoidably determined by the technical inadequacy and immaturity of style common to a group of young dancers who impressed their critics more as the self-conscious founders of tradition than as its assured inheritors. A cursory examination of the early ballets retained in the current repertoire is sufficient to reveal the simple, even primitive nature of their dance bases. For in order to divert undue attention from the poverty of what may legitimately be described as a Basic-English vocabulary, the native choreographer was obliged to dissemble; to remove the emphasis from the dance proper and impose it either on the incidentals of dramatic spectacle and mime—as his predecessors had done in the seventeenth century opera-musicale—or on such accretions of modern ballet as linear development, figuration and grouping, which owe their success more to the virtuosity of the choreographer than to that of the dancer. Outstanding instances of these expedients, wholly dissimilar yet equally successful, are discernible in *The Rake's Progress* and *Apparitions*.

In the former work, and to a large extent in all her ballets, de Valois creates entirely in terms of dramatic action; using her dancers as actors *manqués* in a manner curiously reminiscent of the silent films. Their movements are undoubtedly stylised, but not more so than those, for instance, arranged by M. Barrault in his productions of classical French comedy; for at the moment of their greatest exaggeration—that is to say, at their furthest extension from realistic behaviour—they remain subordinated to the demands of dramatic situation and characterisation. Indeed, when the dance does emerge it is merely an intrusive embellishment—similar in effect to the declamation in the ballet *Comus* and the anti-masques in *The Fairy Queen*—which tends to arrest rather than advance the action and stress the essential disparity of the two media.

In *Apparitions*, on the other hand, Ashton, using approximately the same technical resources and an equally theatrical theme, has contrived a choreographic *tour de force* whose enchanting qualities survive even the matronly refinements of a Covent Garden production. *Apparitions* is not a great or even an original ballet. In comparison with its choreographer's later achievements its patterns and figurations are obvious and perhaps commonplace—intended to placate the eye rather than stimulate the imagination. Furthermore, Ashton's casual adherence to the laws of visual limitation and consequent overcrowding of detail have not yet been replaced by the austere relationships, the dynamic use of space and refinements of linear development which distinguish *Symphonic Variations* and *Scènes de Ballet*. And yet *Apparitions* seizes the attention as surely as the smalltalk of a brilliant conversationalist. We delight in the technical mastery it displays; in the fluent phrasing of simple steps into intricate but uncomplicated group *enchaînements*; and above all, in a subtle elegance of line unparalleled since the days of Fokine's highest invention. But (to hold the analogy a moment longer), when the pointed phrases, seductive cadences and elusive, deprecatory gestures are dead and their enchanter gone, the mind frequently perceives, on recollection, a certain vacuity of matter encircled by the most commonplace of sentiments. So in *Apparitions* the disenchanted eye remarks the subterfuge by which the inadequacy of its dance bases is lent a spurious significance; notes, for example, how the lay-figure of

the Poet, gliding from pose to pose without once betraying reluctance or inability to take flight, directs the vision of the onlooker by a constant though delicate adjustment of its perspective; thus resolving all movement beyond its range into an ambiguous harmony of colour and pattern in which the flaws of invention and executancy are securely hidden. It is a diversion by juxtaposition as beautifully contrived in its way as the *bijouterie* which masks the imperfections of a Tudor gown.

Ashton's absorption with the formal nature of ballet design cannot, however, be attributed simply to temporary exigencies. On the contrary, I believe that it is symptomatic of a persistent if often diverted search for a wholly aesthetic and, consequently, non-representational mode of expression not only freed from the distractive elements of personality and dramatic development inherent in the *ballet d'action* but independent of the more insidious exactions of mood and symbolism. The accomplishment of such an end must inevitably entail a gradual exfoliation of physical idiosyncrasies from the human body until only the impersonal functional organism—the da Vincean "sentient machine"—remains. And Ashton has succeeded to an astonishing degree in carrying out this difficult operation. He has abandoned the optic of the theatre for that of the draughtsman or, more appropriately, the pyrotechnist. But as he clearly cannot materialise his visionary designs unaided, he issues his dancers as self-projections; a near mystical act of transubstantiation which enables him to participate in his ballets as subject and object, artificer and executant. Consequently the ideal Ashton dancer is one capable of renouncing his or her personal identity to become, like a *feu d'artifice*, an intrinsically decorative motif at once capable of weaving and of being woven into an ever-changing fabric of movement. Such a dancer, necessarily lacking true distinction in technique, personality or dramatic ability, albeit naturally endowed with linear grace and a sensuous response to music, belongs to immaturity. For the panache, the stylistic flair of the complete artist is as essentially antipathetic to the negative qualities demanded by Ashton as the nubility of an overstayed schoolgirl to the detention of her uniform. This may be the reason why Ashton's ballets deteriorate in inverse ratio to the technical and artistic development or mastery of their performers; why in an otherwise perfect interpretation of *Symphonic Variations* moments arise when the anonymous relationships are transcended and the hitherto selfless creatures of his will appear suddenly to be imbued with a magical potency; endowed as in a fairy tale with a strange life and consciousness of their own.

It was natural, even inevitable that with so obvious a

Photograph by Roger Wood "SCÈNES DE BALLET" WITH MOIRA SHEARER AND JOHN HART

Photograph by Roger Wood

"APPARITIONS" WITH MARGOT FONTEYN AND ROBERT HELPMANN

predilection for absolute movement Ashton should at first have been influenced by the experimental work of Massine and Balanchine. We must not be misled, however, into supposing that his readiness to assimilate the more important technical and formalistic innovations introduced by them necessarily implies an unthinking acceptance of the conclusions ultimately drawn from a common aesthetic hypothesis. Indeed, in spite of its adherence to that hypothesis, the canon of Ashton's work from approximately *Apparitions* to *Scènes de Ballet* might almost be regarded as an analytical screen whose processes of selection and refinement throughout the evolution of a distinctly individual style enables us to assess, at least by inference, the virtues and the defects inherent in the Symphonic or Neo-Classical modes.

These modes, with their underlying hypothesis, are the immediate results of the choreographic reformation precipitated by Diaghilev's death. They are, in the first place, expressive of a reaction from the menial position held by choreography in the ballet of the late twenties. But so far as the future of the art is concerned, their greater importance lies in the conscious postulation of a belief that the dance medium is capable not merely of the absolute existence already permitted within the arbitrary structure of a *suite de danses*, but also of an organic development in time and space analogous to that of sonata form and similarly affording the highest aesthetic and intellectual satisfaction to creator and observer alike. Now although *Les Présages*, *Choreartium* and *Rouge et Noir* quite superbly vindicate this belief, they reveal at the same time its latent complexities. For in his attempt to achieve the required homogeneity of movement and design the choreographer is faced with the problem of defining anew the relationship of music to the dance. And it is precisely at this point that the schism between Massine, Balanchine and Ashton occurs.

Massine, the most lacking in musical sensibility of the three, is—doubtless because of his deficiency—the most casual in respect for the traditional definitions. Indeed his attitude to the music used in the symphonic ballets reflects not a little that omnipresent and indiscriminate spirit of our age which would reduce all commodities of flesh or spirit to an insensate equability. Ignoring the logical premise that two absolutes cannot be united to produce a transcendent third, he strives, with a somewhat Wagnerian idealism, to fuse music and dance into a single identity. It is, I suspect, a pseudo idealism which disguises Massine's real intention to raise the status of choreography and ballet-maker to that of a major art. In choosing symphonic form to substantiate the hypothesis of absolute and organic movement, he is in effect cocking

a snook at Tchaikovsky, Brahms and company and challenging them, with the defiance of an Annie Oakley, to meet him on level terms. Unfortunately, as Mr. Orwell more or less points out, the dictum that "all things are equal" is soon qualified by the rider, "but some are more equal than others". In actual fact the music-dance relationship in the symphonic ballets turns out to be a complete reversal of the traditional definition; from being the essential (in the Aristotelian sense of the word) of a ballet the choreography becomes an accidental of a symphony. In other words, Massine's ballets do not interpret, illustrate or even establish an equivalence to the music; they indicate their creator's emotional responses to what he considers to be its emotional implications.

Ashton, on the contrary, seems to realise instinctively that music and the dance are not other then rhythmically compatible. In *Apparitions* we can already distinguish the emergence of a sympathetic independence of musical form from the background of slavish imitation. And in *Horoscope*, the apotheosis of the symphonic mode, the process is completed. As I mentioned earlier in connection with *Nocturne*, music to Ashton is as climate to natural phenomena, an indeterminate though irresistible mould.

(*To be continued at two-monthly intervals*)

"THE BRONZE HORSEMAN"

HOW A SOVIET BALLET IS MADE

By ELENA ROSLAVLEVA

IT would seem at first that *The Bronze Horseman*, the new Soviet ballet, choreographed by Rostislav Zakharov to the music of Reingold Glier, the seventy-five year old dean of Russian composers, has nothing to do with contemporaneity. It is not so. By boldly choreographing Pushkin's immortal poem, full of a deep philosophic and dramatic significance, Soviet ballet continues the line which it has been developing throughout these years: the search for serious, inspiring, heroic themes, production of ballets as a complete dramatic performance, carried out in the idiom of the dance.

The theme, however important and indicative of the trends and the tastes in art it may be, is not a guarantee of an assured artistic success, in ballet as in opera. Ballet demands a detailed plan of the future production, worked out by the choreographer preferably in close contact with the composer. A good choreographer is always author of the ballet in his own right.

Work was started on *The Bronze Horseman* as early as 1940. P. F. Abolimov, author of the book, devoted much time to the study of material. He introduced a three-scene prologue, in which Peter the Great is shown in meditation "on the bare shores" of the Neva, conceiving the future city, then—"breaking a window into Europe"—launching one of his frigates, and, lastly, entertaining at one of his historical informal balls or "Assemblies".

With the exception of the first, these episodes do not actually appear in the text of Pushkin's poem. (The only English translation of the poem, to my knowledge, is contained in "The Poems, Prose and Plays of Alexander Pushkin" translated by Babette Deutsch, N.Y., Random House, 1936.)

The story, briefly, is of a petty official, Eugene. He loves Parasha, a simple girl, unconnected with the splendour of Petersburg's officialdom, which he abhors. Parasha is drowned in the flood of 1824. Eugene loses his reason. As he roams Petersburg of the "white nights" he challenges the Bronze Horseman—Falconet's monument dominating the Neva embankment. It then seems to him in his disturbed reason that the Bronze Horseman pursues him. He hears his metallic clatter everywhere.

Russian spectators are grateful to Glier, Zakharov and Professor M. P. Bobishov (one of his early works was the décor for Fokine's *Eros*) for reproducing one of the most favourite works of Pushkin's in theatrical form. It means much, too, that *The Bronze Horseman* is a ballet to a truly national theme. It is a Russian work of art in its very core—both for the beautiful scenes of Peter's period and the magnificent St. Petersburg of a hundred years later, the "*balagani*" on the Senate Square known to anyone who has seen *Petrouchka*—the simple and graceful Russian dances of Parasha and the girls, and the wonderful living *ensembles* of the crowd. These scenes, close and dear to the Russian heart, are gratifying in classical ballet, which has given so much space to kings, queens, shahs, Egyptians, Spaniards, and various fantastic characters.

Abolimov read his "book" to the Kirov theatre company on June 18th, 1941. The war broke out three days later. Composition of *The Bronze Horseman* was resumed only in 1946. Rostislav Zakharov, then just out of ballet school, started his career as choreographer in 1934 in the very same theatre with the production of *The Fountain of Bakhchiserai*, marking a very important stage in Soviet ballet. Through the

THIS LITHOGRAPH, DATED 1879, ILLUSTRATES ONE OF THE EPISODES OF "THE BRONZE HORSEMAN" RECONSTRUCTED IN THE SOVIET BALLET DESCRIBED IN THIS ARTICLE

"Madder the weather grew, and ever
Higher upswelled the roaring river
And bubbled like a kettle, and whirled
And like a maddened beast was hurled
Swift on the city . . ." PUSHKIN

Prisoner in the Caucasus, Mistress into Maid and the opera *Ruslan and Ludmila*—his other Pushkin works—Zakharov arrived a mature master for the composition of *The Bronze Horseman.*

Having received Abolimov's brief libretto, he worked for more than a year, till the autumn of 1947, creating the detailed plan of composition for R. M. Glier. The plan consisted of forty "numbers" with a detailed description of the contents and nature of each scene and dance and exact timing. Zakharov spent many hours in museums and libraries, studying material, archive documents, historical literature and iconography. The composition of the choreographer's plan was conducted in close contact with Glier whom Zakharov met for numerous talks.

Glier started composing the music in September, 1947, and completed the score by March, 1948. The orchestration, to which Glier always pays special attention, was done only by February 1949. This did not prevent the choreographer, of course, from creating the actual choreography and rehearsing the ballet.

In the course of the rehearsals it was found necessary to shorten the music. The score was reduced to the length usual for a Russian ballet—one hundred and twenty-five minutes. Glier introduced some changes into the music, naturally necessitated in the progress of the work, and altogether it may be said that the composition of the ballet lasted for a year and a half.

The music of *The Bronze Horseman* is composed according to the symphonic principle: the main themes, connected with each of the pivotal characters, are intensified and developed in the course of the ballet. The juxtaposition, fusion and combination of these themes makes the music both deeply significant and melodious. What has not been possible to express in

the actual choreography is added to in the imagination by the depth of the music.

Having started the actual production of the ballet, Zakharov first of all requested from the entire company of the Kirov theatre a serious study of the epoch to be rendered in the ballet. This was accomplished with the help of expert advisors. It was declared, too, that there were no small parts in the ballet—all were artistically important, from Peter I to Parasha's mother.

What are the most successful scenes of the ballet? It must be said that Zakharov is above all a first-class producer, *régisseur* in the Russian theatrical sense of the word. Therefore he succeeded most with the wonderful scenes of purely theatrical effect—such as the flood, and the Senate Square. This only adds to Zakharov's qualities as choreographer, for in a big dramatic ballet the role of a *régisseur* is most important and without this quality the ballet would never attain a dramatic unity.

Zakharov did create a perfectly integrated and very talented production. In the "flood scene" which is the culminating point of the ballet, he displayed much creative imagination. With the hand of a master he arranged most impressive *mises en scène* and groupings. The flood starts gradually—now the crowd looks with anxiety at the water level and by the poses and expression of the people you can guess that it is rising—then the water trickles on to the embankment and the crowd starts slowly retreating before the approaching menace. At last the Neva has conquered. The stage becomes a tumult of grey and menacing waves. One can distinguish in the dim light some furniture, logs of wood, a sentry-box and even some rowing-boats carried away by the water. Eugene watches this scene from a marble lion on the flooded embankment. He had climbed its back, refusing to leave the place from which he still hoped to rescue his Parasha.

The entire scene is done in the idiom of pantomime. The effect of the flood is achieved with the help of a very simple device—the stage is covered with tarpaulin and the people moving under it in a way indicated by the choreographer create the effect of the waves. This scenic effect can hardly be compared to anything shown heretofore in ballet. It depends to a considerable extent on the lighting, but largely on the excellent rehearsing of the many people who take part in this scene and the inventive brilliancy of the producer.

(To be continued)

TELEVISION BALLET

By LISA GORDON SMITH

BY the time this appears in print the sixth and last of the present series of Philip Bate's *Ballet for Beginners* will have been televised, and will, it is understood, include a summary of the preceding programmes.

Numbers four and five in the series were remarkably informative. On November 25th the subject was "Mime" and was treated quite exhaustively from the Commedia dell' Arte to the present day. No reference was made to the even earlier English mime, but doubtless this was not from any disregard for its merits, but simply because there is no proof that it did, in fact, have any influence upon the mime used in ballet, which is, of course, entirely continental in origin.

The "language" of the classical mime of ballet was given an amusing and helpful "dictionary" in the delightful action-jingle "This is the House that Man Built," performed by David Paltenghi.

On January 27th, the fifth programme was devoted to a masterly analysis of *Swan Lake* (Act II) in which a company of dancers in practice dress "marched" the skeleton patterns of the *ensembles* and *soli*, which were afterwards danced in the usual form and costumes, with Violetta Elvin and John Hart as Odette and the Prince. The informative brilliance of this analysis could not have been bettered, nor can its value be overstressed. It was, to the technical structure of the ballet, what Adrian Stokes' written analysis, in his book "Russian Ballets", was to its emotional structure. Both are masterpieces in their own way.

On December 9th we were shown *Salome*, created by choreographer Celia Franca and producer Christian Simpson in close collaboration, and reputed to be the first dance drama produced on television. The story, inspired by Oscar Wilde inspired by the Bible, was dramatised to a beautiful and appropriate score especially composed by B.B.C. musician, James Hartley.

If the performance was notably lacking in all dance form, it was certainly dramatic, moving and of great emotional impact. It may not have been good ballet, but it was good television, and an interesting experiment to have made.

Celia Franca and the Metropolitan Ballet appeared in this, and again, ten days later, in Act II of *Coppélia* and scenes from *Pleasuredrome*.

This also was produced by Christian Simpson and was, it is to be feared, positively the last appearance of the Metropolitan Ballet.

Coppélia was a somewhat mixed bag of good and bad moments, the worst aspect being that the action might not always have been clear to viewers who were not already familiar with the ballet.

Pleasuredrome, the last addition to the Metropolitan's

B.B.C. photograph

PAULA HINTON WITH HARRY CORDWELL (LEFT) AS HILARION AND MEMBERS OF THE BALLET RAMBERT BEING TELEVISED IN "GISELLE"

repertoire before their untimely demise, was choreographed by the American ballerina, Rosella Hightower, from a story by Peter Williams and to music specially composed by John Lanchbery. It was in many ways this company's most adult ballet, and was brilliantly performed by all the cast. It came over extremely well on television, even to the "sense" of the vividly coloured décor. Michel de Lutry's *soli* were breathtaking. It is all too seldom that we see male dancing of such virility, vigour and accuracy, and it was very pleasant to see him cast correctly, as a character, rather than a classical, dancer.

On January 13th, the same producer presented a mixed programme of Eastern and Western dancing, in which Mirabai appeared to be performing Indian dances of great beauty. It was difficult to be sure, however, as there was something radically wrong with the lighting, and she was almost invisible at times. The Indonesian Candle Dance, on the other hand, was extremely beautifully presented.

Beryl Morina and Jack Spurgeon executed a classical variation, and Spain was represented by Consuelo Carmona and Angelo Andes. Their performance i exciting in any circumstances, and they danced thei best on this occasion, despite their having to circum navigate the barricade of pillars so favoured by thi producer.

On February 6th Ballet Rambert were televised, prio to their departure on a six weeks' tour of Germany The ballets were *The Fugitive* and *Peter and the Wolf* The former is potentially good material for the screen and Christian Simpson made the most of it. It was no his fault that the medium showed up some fundamenta weaknesses in the choreography—or was it only Time lending disenchantment?

Peter and the Wolf, with the story read by Walter Gore, was delightful to those who knew the ballet, but far from clear to people seeing it for the first time. Paula Hinton is a most characteristic Peter.

It might be an interesting experiment for the choreographer to rearrange a specifically television version of this ballet. For the children's programmes, in particular, it should have a charm equalling that of Muffin the Mule!

Modern English Ballet

By

FERNAU HALL

Here is something new in ballet books: a comprehensive, lively and controversial work on the evolution of contemporary ballet in England, prefaced by an international survey of the evolution of ballet. The author shows how English ballet has grown out of the great ballet tradition and how it has enriched that tradition. He analyses in detail the contributions of most of the leading choreographers, artistic directors, designers, composers, teachers, dancers and patrons. It is an indispensable book for all lovers of the art of ballet.

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Ballet on Record

Résumé of the last quarter's releases

By PETER CRAIG RAYMOND

LA BOUTIQUE FANTASQUE is brought to life in this recording of the lovely music by Rossini to Massine's perfect ballet idea. Played by L'Orchestra Stabile Accademia di Santa Cecilia, under Serafin, Rossini receives a splendid performance. One of Massine's principal works in the Diaghilev era, *The Fantastic Shop*, should have a principal place in the record collection of every ballet-lover. (H.M.V., C3910 to C3912.)

The most interesting of the quarter's issues is that of Brian Easdale's music for *The Red Shoes* ballet, from the Archer's film. Played here by the Philharmonia Orchestra under the conduction of Muir Mathieson, the suite is fortunate in being one of that orchestra's better performances. By a normally uninspired orchestra, this set is the exception which, although not proving any rule, at least shows the Philharmonia as being capable of a really fine performance. Add to this that the recording is excellent and I need say no more in the line of persuasion.

The music itself is worthy of great praise. This *Red Shoes* suite is more than just music; or even ballet music! It is music dreamed, breathed, given sole life for the ballet. Without a single stray thought, without a single ill-construed note or chord or bar—Easdale has written fine and beautiful music such as we rarely hear to-day. (Columbia, DX1597/8.)

Incidental recordings recently have included one of the waltz from Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*. This is played by the Liverpool Philharmonic. The coupling is of the Intermezzo and Serenade from *Hassan* by Delius. Hugo Rignold conducts. (Columbia DX1621.)

Of greater, much greater importance is the new issue of Igor Stravinsky's inspired and invigorating ballet music—*Le Sacre du Printemps*. Played by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, under Pierre Monteux, Stravinsky's exciting score comes to brilliant life. The issue of this set will accentuate the crime of this work's non-performance for so, so long. That is, for some it will. For others it will merely accentuate a crime!

This "picture of ancient Russia", choreographed by Nijinsky, was first staged in Paris during 1913 at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. Diaghilev brought it to London with him later in the same year. The present choreography is by Massine, who, I take on trust from my memory, revised Nijinsky's around 1920.

Barbaric in its chord sequences, it may be. Cacophonous, discordant, disgusting—all this it has and will receive as epithet; but not as epitaph! Whether you

can attune ears sugared and deafened by the beauty of Tchaikovsky to the reality and vital outspokenness of Stravinsky, or not, is no matter. Admit this as a major work of a major composer. If nothing else it stands as a real monument to the artistry and artistic integrity of Stravinsky, Massine, Nijinsky and to Diaghilev, the butt of the cynicist too often. It also stands as a reminder of the utter commerciality of our ballet company managements. Let those who call the *Rite of Spring* "noise", pack their ballet palaces in the evening; that is their home.

As the record companies this month show a temporary abstinence from ballet music, I have space to write of some interesting native dance music. Folk dance music is of great importance to ballet and for this reason alone should occupy some space on the ballet student's shelves. Apart from this, its spontaneous, unaffected depth and beauty will appeal to most lovers of ballet. Andres Segovia, guitarist of the authentic Spanish-race folk music, has waxed a *Fandanguillo* by Turina and a Torroba dance (Columbia, LX1248). There is a stirring, vibrant life in this music; a real depth brought out by the powerful chords plucked from the steel. Each side plays almost five minutes, but never does this music flag or lose interest; treble or bass, soft or strong, rhythmically pounding or quivering tense—every bar has its purpose, a purpose as old as life. To move. Segovia succeeds in capturing every phase of his art; this record is a superb example.

After the twenty-four preludes recorded by Moiseivitsch (H.M.V., C7772-5) all we needed were the mazurkas. Halina Stefanska has obliged with two, the A minor and C sharp minor (H.M.V., B9866). Both extremely well played and recorded, the disc should captivate the Chopin lover. From the ballet angle, of course, some of the preludes are of most value. And "The" prelude is as beautifully played as ever I shall hear.

Granadas' *Danza Espanola No. 5* (The Andaluza) is coupled to the Falla Spanish dance No. 1 from *La Vida Breve* (Columbia, DX1634). Played by violinist Arthur Grumiaux, these make interesting additions to the dance music list. A cellist, Zara Nelsova, of whom, I must confess, I have not heard before, plays two pieces by Prokhofiev (Decca, F9332). The first, from Prokhofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, is "Masques" which has a piano accompaniment. The coupling is the march from *Musiques d'enfants*. A fine recording of too-rarely-heard music. Prodigy Christian Ferras makes a rather half-hearted rendition of *Romanza Andaluza* and *Praeludium* by Kreisler and Pugnani (Decca, K2299). But again, they are interesting as authentic and recreated folk music.

Following their issue of the phenomonal recording by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, the H.M.V. Company has received several memos to the effect that Igor Stravinsky has written other works! A number of sets by Stravinsky are available in America on Victor, and are thus available to the H.M.V. presses over here. But, as only a very limited audience exists for the composer, I would urge that—if you wish this set—you buy now. This will prove that a small demand does exist and the other recordings will come. The only way to obtain more good records is to show the company that you want those obtainable now. The set in question is conducted by Pierre Monteux who premiered the ballet in Paris. It is on four records (H.M.V., 9409-12, special order only). And the other set available, by the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Van Beinum, is only "very good" compared with this "perfect".

In the next issue I will include details of those recordings of ballet interest which are to be deleted from the catalogues this year. Immediate steps to buy these about-to-be-deleted recordings should be made. A year from now they will cost three times the price at which they now retail.

RASDEN MAS UTOMO WAS PRESENTED BY "EASTERN WORLD" IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE ROYAL INDIA AND PAKISTAN SOCIETY AT A SPECIAL PERFORMANCE OF INDONESIAN DANCES AT KING GEORGE'S HALL, LONDON, ON JANUARY 25TH. HE AND HIS COMPANY OF DANCERS AND MUSICIANS SUBSEQUENTLY APPEARED AT WYNDHAM'S THEATRE DURING THE WEEK COMMENCING FEBRUARY 27TH

Balletomane's Bookshelf

THE BALLET ANNUAL 1950. Edited by Arnold L. Haskell. (A. & C. Black Ltd. 21s. net).

Good as last year's Ballet Annual was, this one is even better—a particularly full year of ballet being largely responsible, but also the unusually interesting photographs and the wide range of articles. Mr. Haskell reviews most of the London events and while he does so has some trenchant, brave and very necessary things to say about arena ballet and the "unfortunate success" of *The Red Shoes*. This year's Ballet Annual is definitely a "must" for everyone.

PAS DE DEUX. THE ART OF PARTNERING. By Anton Dolin. (Kamin Dance Publishers, New York. $3.50).

I do not know whether this book is easily obtainable in this country but I hope enough copies will be available for the benefit of our male dancers. Anton Dolin's reputation as the supreme partner of his time is unchallenged and the wisdom he has garnered through a long and brilliant career is now at the disposal of the younger generation. In addition to some general advice and suggestions as to preliminary exercises he goes, step by step and movement by movement, through the great classical *pas de deux*—*Casse Noisette*, *Giselle*, and the two from *Le Lac des Cygnes*, explaining the reason for the different interpretations of each. As one reads his text and studies the photographs of himself and Markova in the various key moments, one finds oneself living again through those so well-remembered performances. I have only two regrets—that he did not include the *grand adagio* from *The Sleeping Beauty* and that the drawings are as poor as the photographs are excellent.

(Since writing the above notice I learn that Messrs. A. & C. Black Ltd. will be publishing an English edition of this book, price 8s. 6d. This should be ready early in the summer.—P.W.M.)

LA DANSE. Photographs by Serge Lido. (Revue "Masques", 15s. net).

This also is probably not easy to come by outside London, but it is well worth hunting for as it is well up to the standard of the two previous issues. Every dancer of any note who has appeared in Paris during the past year or so, will be found here, including Fonteyn, Amaya and Dunham as well as all the famous French dancers. There are rather too many out-door action pictures taken from viewpoints giving the impression that dancers are in the habit of leaping over the gargoyles on Notre Dame, but even these have a liveliness and spirit which makes their absurdity easy to forgive, and, these Gallic exuberances apart, the photographs are admirable. P.W.M.

COMPLETE BOOK OF BALLETS. By C. W. Beaumont. (Putnam, 1950. 25s.)

I am, like Boswell, unwilling "to swell my book with long quotations from what is" or should be "in everybody's hands"; and feel that to add to the authoritative praise evoked by this, the most indispensable of all books on the subject, would be impertinent if not absurd. On its first appearance some twelve years ago it could indeed be claimed "that the world contemplated with wonder so stupendous a work achieved by one man, while other countries had thought such undertakings fit only for whole academies." The passing years have not only left that wonder undiminished, but added to it, as it were, another miracle in the form of Mr. Beaumont's intricate insertion of an accumulated *addenda* and *corrigenda*.

I feel bound to add, however, that Mr. Beaumont's masterpiece is not so well served by its publishers as previously. No doubt affected by restrictions and shortage of materials, it is now offered to us at an increased price but in inferior condition. The print varies in clarity; the binding lacks spinal support; the plates, often ill-produced, are inserted haphazardly in groups; there is no longer a coloured dust-trap; and many of our leading contemporary choreographers are represented only by minor works and adolescent photographs. ALAN STOREY.

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